of white colonists do not exist in Bougainville even today, but since 177
the island affords great stretches of the finest soil, and in addition favorable sites for anchoring and landing, the time is certainly not far off when tropical agriculture in modern form will enter there, too, and then even the last vestiges of traditional culture will come to a rapid end as has been the case everywhere else in the South Sea Islands.

Stanley entitled his travel book about Africa Through the Dark 080
Continent, but a depiction of Bougainville that is exhaustive in every respect could justifiably bear the title: "From the Darkest Part of a Dark Island World."

[4] Character of the People

Older reports as a rule give an incorrect portrayal of the character 181
of the islanders; there was a general tendency to consider them among the wildest of the South Sea inhabitants. It must be conceded that on first acquaintance they do not inspire much confidence; the naked almost black figures with their sparkling eyes, lively gesticulation, and the excellent arms they always have at hand on land as well as at sea, necessarily arouse distrust -- all the more so since their former numerous warlike encounters with the whites and their reputation of being vicious cannibals seem to confirm the preconceived notion.

I will say no more about conflicts with the whites. In most cases 721
the natives were acting defensively, and wherever a real attack upon white men can be proved, the reason must frequently enough be regarded as an act of vengeance for some preceding injustice. Indeed it cannot be denied that there are among the islanders also bad individuals who, for the sake of profit and in order to acquire the valuable goods of the whites more easily, do not hesitate to apply force; but cases of this sort occur everywhere in the world.

As workers and servants the islanders are loyal and reliable; they 181
are not particularly intelligent and at the beginning of their service [153]
require much training before they comprehend what they have to do, but once they have comprehended this, then one can rely on them to do their duty without constant supervision. At home they do not 181
work excessively hard, for they have no nose for profit or accumulating 461
material possessions; however, they always have sufficient food and [556]
keep their plantations in good order; they see to it that they have good dwellings and take great pains in the construction of their boats,

both large and small. On the whole they treat their women well and share with them the labors of field work. I could cite a great number of examples proving that they do not always kill everyone who lands on their island voluntarily or involuntarily. On the east side of the islands it frequently happens that people from Ongtang Java, from the Gilbert Islands or from other groups situated to the east are blown off their course and land there; many of these are traded off for a small present to ships that occasionally pass by and others establish a new home there. In the year 1896, on the west coast, I met nine natives from the Trobriand Group (on the coast of New Guinea). They had been driven in their boat all the way to the little island of Saposa on the northwest end of Bougainville and had been individually adopted into the families; they were getting along so well that I succeeded only after long debate in persuading them to come on board so as to be sent to their homeland. In 1885 an American had settled with some other whites on an island in the King Albert Strait between Buka and Bougainville. The man appears to have been an unbearable fellow; several of his comrades left him in a boat and, after a long journey, landed on the island of Nusa at the north end of New Mecklenburg; only one endured it for some time, but then also left him with the aid of the natives; the latter at first kept him for a time in Hanahan on the east coast of northern Buka and then brought him overland to Carola Harbor. From there he got to New Pomerania [New Britain] with a ship that had docked there. The man asserted that during his almost three month long stay among the natives he had always been treated in a friendly and hospitable manner and never had the feeling that he was in a particularly dangerous situation. The old chieftain Gorai in the Shortland Group saved many a white from death. When at the beginning of the eighties a German schooner from Apia (Samoa) was stranded on a neighboring island and Gorai found out that the white crew was in great danger, he assembled his people, manned a number of his large boats, and went to aid the endangered whites. For a long time afterwards they were his guests until they had the opportunity to get to Mioko in the Bismarck Archipelago. On another occasion a merchant schooner from Australia had struck a coral reef in the Shortland Islands. Gorai was away, and some less favorably disposed islanders planned to kill the crew of the ship and steal the cargo. But Gorai came home

181 ● [146] 648

unexpectedly and immediately went on board, where his people proposed the plan to him. In his laconic manner he answered: "Good! Do what you want to, but I am on the side of the white men." Obviously the hostile venture did not come to pass, and with the aid of Gorai and the islanders who had recently been so hostilely disposed, they succeeded [5] in setting their schooner afloat again. A favorite expression of the old man was: "To be sure, I have a black skin, but my heart is white." When he died in 1894 one of his last commands was that no slaves be killed after his death--a custom that even today is still practiced in Bougainville and on the Shortland Islands upon the death of a chieftain. A few years ago I was lying at anchor in the little Baniu Bay on the north coast of Bougainville. A great part of the coastal people was absent, as I found out, on a war expedition against the mountain people. On the following morning the whole group, about fifty men, came back and brought along as a prisoner of war a man who was carrying a child about a year old in his arms. Upon interrogation it turned out that, farther inland, they had surprised a number of natives who were quietly working on a plantation; men as well as women had hastily taken flight, and they had not succeeded in taking any prisoners. Since, however, the inland villages had now been alarmed, they gave up their war expedition and retreated to the previously mentioned plantation to pass the night there. During the night they had heard a slight noise and, suspecting an attack by the mountain people, had carefully kept watch; they saw a single man who walked forward, looking around cautiously, until, having reached a banana tree, he picked up a child and then just as cautiously started out on his way back. He and the child had then been silently surrounded and captured. The child had been forgotten by its mother during the hasty flight. When it was finally missed, the father had returned, despite the risks connected with it, to seek and save his offspring in the hiding place known to him; he was more than a little surprised when I bought him free with a few articles and he was told he could return home safely--which he hastily did.

These examples, I believe, suffice to demonstrate that despite cannibalism and other not particularly gentle customs and practices, the northern Solomon Islanders on the whole are not so cruel and wild as they have been otherwise described. They contrast very favorably in comparison with the inhabitants of the other islands of the archipelago, especially with the notorious headhunters of Vella Lavella and New Georgia. To be sure, feuds of greater and lesser duration are not infrequent among neighboring tribes, especially between the coast inhabitants and the mountain dwellers, but on the other South Sea Islands quite similar conditions prevail and it occurs to